

**Town of Merrillville
Town Council Meeting Minutes (Amended)
Municipal Complex
September 8, 2020
6:30 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER: President Bella called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

INVOCATION: Invocation was given by Impact Pastor Robert Szoke.

MOMENT OF SILENCE: Councilman Minchuk asked for an additional moment of silence for Nick Schultz being the anniversary of his sacrifice for this town.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Veterans Fletcher Williams and Gene Ward.

ROLL CALL – Roll Call taken by Madam Clerk-Treasurer White Gibson, Present were Councilman Spann, Councilman Hardaway, Councilman Minchuk, Councilwoman Uzelac, Vice - President White, and President Bella. Six present. Councilman Pettit is absent.

PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND REMONSTRATIONS:

CONSENT AGENDA

Accts. Payable Register Voucher Approval for September 8, 2020

Approval of Town Council Meeting Minutes (Amended) of August 25, 2020.

Motion by Vice-President White, seconded by Councilwoman Uzelac. Madame Clerk-Treasurer states that there was an adjustment to the accounts payable voucher/ vender 165 for Petro Choice. The original amount was \$2,650.21 and now is \$582.18. Roll call vote 6-0. Motion carries.

Assistant Chief Kosta Nuses states that on September 3, 2020 at approximately 9:30 a.m. the Merrillville Police Department was dispatched regarding a suicidal subject attempting suicide by cop by use of a rifle. Assistant Chief Nuses thanks Police Chief Cuttino who was one of the first Officers to arrive to the scene. He also thanks Officers, Reed, Nash, Enyeart and Davis. Officer Davis determined the rifle to be a toy gun. Officer Nash was the Supervisor on the scene. He ensured the public safety and made a call to SWAT. Neither the subject nor the Officers were harmed. Assistant Chief Nuses states that he is happy that the Officers on the Merrillville Police Department show professionalism.

Councilman Hardaway states that he received a call from the suspect's step-mother and she praised the Police Officers for such a great job. Also, she thanked Chief Cuttino because this matter could've resulted differently.

STANDING COMMITTEES

BUDGET & FINANCE- WHITE - Meetings have taken place with Cender & Cender. Department budgets were reviewed and it was determined that the Town is short on funds. Due to the pandemic monies are coming into the Town slower than usual. Vice - President White understands the money shortage and still believes that the Town is moving in the right direction.

COUNCIL AFFAIRS- UZELAC- Councilwoman Uzelac stated that an executive session was held last week. However, at the next meeting, Councilman Minchuk and Councilwoman Uzelac will discuss the upcoming proposed ordinances which will be presented to the Council Affairs Committee.

PUBLIC WORKS- MINCHUK- A meeting was held a week ago with MCD. MCD is proposing a project to lift at Stefek Park. Building this lift station will alleviate all flooding problems at Turkey Creek. MCD currently has a temporary solution but building the lift station is the permanent solution. MCD is ready to move forward with the project and will have it completed by spring 2021. Motion by Councilman Minchuk, seconded by Councilwoman Uzelac to approve the Town to donate a portion of the land at Stefek Park for MCD to build a lift station. Roll call vote 6-0. Motion carries.

Councilwoman Uzelac and President Bella confirm that the Attorney for MCD have advised them that this is a \$750,000 project and that this is not a cost to the citizens of Merrillville.

ELECTIONS, PUBLIC RELATIONS, & CENSUS 2020-PETTIT- No Report

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS- WHITE –Vice - President White states that he enjoyed his visit to the Compost Station and that President Bella mentioned to him that he would like Town Hall to begin recycling.

Vice - President White states that he did an inspection at the Police Department and determined that there is poor circulation. He suggests that the carpet should be tested.

Also, Vice - President White is still concerned about the virus and would like to see another COVID testing site.

PERSONNEL POLICY & EMPLOYEE BENEFITS- UZELAC- Councilwoman Uzelac states that budget hearings have taken for the last two weeks. She believes that the Town is going strong for 2021.

PUBLIC SAFETY- MINCHUK- Councilman Minchuk asked Assistant Chief Nuses to provide a list with the name of the Officers mentioned today for the incident on September 3, 2020. He would like the Officers to be recognized. Also, an executive session will be scheduled soon. He will provide an update once a date has been selected.

Councilman Minchuk states that the citizens are complaining about the Lake County Dispatch Center. He feels that a Dispatch Center located in the Merrillville Police Department will be best for the Town. He plans to reach out to the State Representatives regarding this matter.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT-PETTIT- Town Manager Reardon states that the Economic Development Committee is scheduled to meet Friday, September 11, 2020 at noon to discuss 3 tax abatements applicants. Following the Economic Development Committee Meeting the Economic Development Commission will meet to discuss 1 of the 3 applicants. They will then be presented at the September 22, 2020 Town Council Meeting.

PARKS & RECREATION- UZELAC- Crescent Lake Park is now complete. Bidding process will begin October, 2020 for Curtis Park in Chapel Manor.

Jan Orlich, Director of Parks stated that the Park Department hired South County Landscape for landscaping at Crescent Park. She stated that the Public Works Department free of charge will truck load dirt to Crescent Park for South County Landscape to complete Park's landscaping.

UTILITY LIAISONS-SPANN - No Report

ABANDONED PROPERTIES-WHITE - Vice - President White states a two-story home located at 57th & Adams Street was in poor condition. The home is now looking great and believes the owner may be looking to sell.

TOWN IDENTIFY & BEAUTIFICATION-UZELAC –Councilwoman Uzelac states there has been ideas mentioned at the workshops but nothing has been written in stone. A meeting will be held at a later date.

Vice- President White states that funds are needed in order for the Committee ideas to come to light.

Councilwoman Uzelac stated that hopefully funds will be available in 2021.

**COMMUNITY & RECREATION CENTER-MINCHUK & PETTIT
DEPARTMENT & COMMISSION REPORTS**

Councilman Minchuk states that a meeting is scheduled tomorrow; September 9, 2020 at 4:30 p.m. Topic of discussion will be Pop Warner, Merrillville Soccer and budget.

Lake County Solid Waste Management-White- No Report

Northern Indiana Regional Planning Commission- Hardaway –A meeting is scheduled for next week.

Storm water Management Resources- Lake- No Report

Department Reports- NONE

GENERAL ORDERS: NONE

ORDINANCES

FIRST READINGS (Discussion and Roll Call Vote)

SECOND READINGS (Discussion and Roll Call Vote)

Ordinance 20-11, Discussion, Public Comment and Roll Call Vote

An Ordinance of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, appropriating additional monies within the Merrillville Fire Territory Operating Fund of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, for the year 2020 not included in the current budget. The amount of \$25,000 to go into building, ground and repairs. Motion by Councilman Minchuk, seconded by Councilwoman Uzelac. President Bella asked were there any public comment? There were none. Roll call vote 6-0. Motion carries.

RESOLUTIONS: 20-11, (Discussion and Voice Vote)

Resolution 20-11, Discussion and Voice Vote

A Resolution of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, transferring monies of the 2020 Budget within the General Fund. Motion by Councilman Hardaway, seconded by Councilman Spann. Roll call vote 6-0. Motion carries.

BZA ACTIONS

Petitioner: Heather Williamson MC Cormick Erskine
Owner: Heather Williamson MC Cormick Erskine
Request: Special Exception Approval
Purpose: To Allow the housing of chickens
Location: 8703 Windy Hill Court (Hobart)
Zoning: R-1 Residential Zoning District
Case#: Z19E9-0820

Motion to deny by Councilman Hardaway, seconded by Councilman Minchuk. Roll call vote 6-0. Motion granted. Petition denied.

Petitioner: Lisa James
Owner: Lisa James
Request: Special Exception Approval
Purpose: To Allow the housing of chickens
Location: 8604 Windy Hill Court (Hobart)
Zoning: R-1 Residential Zoning District
Case#: Z18E8-0820

Motion to deny by Councilman Minchuk, seconded by Councilman Hardaway. Roll call vote 6-0. Motion granted. Petition denied.

Petitioner: Gateway Services USA LLC
Owner: Timothy Styka
Request: Special Exception Approval
Purpose: To allow pet aftercare services-pet cremation services
Location: 8281 Wright Street
Zoning: M-1, Industrial Zoning District
Case: Z21E11-0820

Motion by Councilman Hardaway, seconded by Councilman Minchuk. Roll call vote 6-0. Motion carries.

Petitioner: Bill Lalezas
Owner: SFC Funding 1, LLC
Request: Special Exception Approval
Purpose: To allow a LED electronic message
Location: 8140 Mississippi St.
Zoning: C-3, Highway Commercial Zoning District
Case#: Z22uV5-0820

Motion by Councilman Minchuk, seconded by Councilman Hardaway. Roll call vote 6-0. Motion carries.

OLD BUSINESS: NONE

NEW BUSINESS: Town Hall will resume regular hours from 8:00-4:30 beginning September 21, 2020. The Clerk-Treasurers Office and Town Court are excluded. Motion by Councilman Hardaway, seconded by Councilwoman Uzelac. Roll call vote 6-0. Motion carries.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Tim Fortier

Chairman of Board of Zoning Appeals
4444 E. 97th Ave.
Merrillville, IN 46410

Mr. Fortier feels that the Board failed the two petitioners requesting housing for chickens because regulations were put in place to make exceptions for their request.

Gail Neman

7510 Lincoln Mill Road
Merrillville, IN 46410

Ms. Neman has lived at her home for 44 years. She and neighbors take pride in their yards. She is concerned that the chickens nearby are now causing the neighborhood to look poorly.

Nancy Barren

8603 W. Mill Court
Merrillville, IN 46410

Ms. Barren expresses her concerns regarding the chickens in her neighborhood. She states that she has submitted pictures of the chickens in her yard to Mrs. Shine of Planning and Building. The owners are not taking good care of their chickens and they are running loose.

Gene Ward

Precinct Committeeman for 20 years
Merrillville, IN 46410

Mr. Gene expresses his concerns regarding the chickens and the Council consideration of possibly changing the Town's ordinance. He believes that the Council should not change the ordinance for this will only make matters worse.

Rob Maravilla

7589 W. Mill Court.
Merrillville, IN 46410

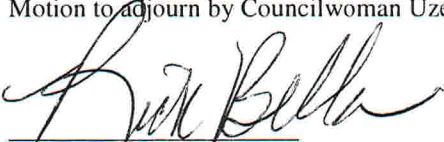
Mr. Maravilla has resided at his resident for 38 years. He states that he along with his neighbors are confused as to why the Town are entertaining these petitioners request for housing of chickens if it's against the Town's ordinance. He has spent the past three years attending Town Council Meetings hoping that the Council is ensuring that the new neighbors are following the Towns ordinances.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The next Town Council Meeting is scheduled for September 22, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT at 7:44 p.m.

Motion to adjourn by Councilwoman Uzelac, seconded by Councilwoman Hardaway. Motion carries.


Rick Bella President
Kelly White Gibson Clerk-Treasurer